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Mary Ann Sward

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FS 726

Basic Tool Set

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Basic Tool Set

Mary Ann Sward
Extension housing specialist

You need a starter set of tools—a good claw hammer, pliers, one or two sizes of both standard and Phillips screwdrivers, and an adjustable wrench—for regular home maintenance.

This is a starter set. As your skill and confidence grow, you can add more sophisticated tools.

The emphasis is "you." If it comes down to it, tell the rest of the family to keep their hands off your tools, and buy them starter sets of their own. When something needs fixing, the best set of tools won't do much good if it's in the teenager's car trunk.

STARTING YOUR SET

Buy tools of good quality.

Premium quality tools are not necessary, but very cheap tools (especially edged tools such as saws and chisels) often are unsatisfactory. Good tools can last a lifetime or longer when properly used and cared for. Shop carefully and compare features and warranties. Specific tools are discussed in greater detail in other fact sheets in this series.

If you need a more costly tool for a once-only job, consider renting the tool, but only if you've learned (1) how to use it; (2) how to protect it; and (3) how to protect yourself from it, if necessary.

The following tools and supplies are frequently used in home maintenance. Buy those marked with an asterisk first. Other fact sheets in this series describe the basic tools. You should read them before you buy.

Hammers:

- claw*
- tack

Screwdrivers:

- standard*
- Phillips*

Pliers:

- slip-joint*
- needle nose

Safety glasses*

Crescent wrench, 6 inch size*

12 foot tape, locking is best

Saws:

- rip
- crosscut
- coping
- hacksaw
- keyhole

Brushes:

- wall
- trim

Putty knife

Spackle knife

Exacto knife, razor blade

Adhesives

Machine oil

Several soft, lint-free rags

Assorted nails and screws

Drop cloths - available in a

9x12 foot plastic sheet or use old flat bed sheets to catch paint, chips, etc.

TOOL CARE

Use a tool only for the job for which it is intended.

Rust and abuse are two of the greatest enemies of tools.

Keep your hands and tools clean while you are using them. Be sure they are clean before you put them away. Store them so that they will not be damaged while not in use.

Wipe metal dry to prevent rust. Put a light coat of machine oil on sharp edged tools before storing, especially if they are kept in a damp place. If the tool becomes rusty, rub it with fine pumice or very fine steel wool before oiling. Protect the sharp edges of saws, auger bits, planes, and chisels so they do not bump or come in contact with other metal. (A cardboard sleeve can be tied around many of the tools.) Store them so that other tools won't fall on them.

Keep cutting tools sharp. The teeth of a crosscut saw should be nearly as sharp as a needle; chisels and plane irons should be nearly razor sharp.

The very little effort it takes to care for your tools repays you many times over. Just lifting a well cared for tool from its allotted spot in your tool kit can give you much of the confidence

you need to go ahead and do a repair job.

TOOL STORAGE

A basic tool set fits well in a fishing tackle box, if you don't have a regular tool kit. Buy one that is fairly lightweight, has compartments for storage, and is portable—and lockable if you have small children about.

When you advance to more permanent storage, again remember the curiosity of little folk. As much as possible, have the tools easy to see, reach, and handle (for you). Tools can be hung on a wall, on a portable board, in a wall cabinet that can be locked, or stored in a drawer in the kitchen or utility room.

When you plan the storage area, try laying the tools in different ways on a piece of paper to determine the most convenient location for each. Trace around each tool to show where it is to be stored. This pattern will help determine the size and shape of the storage area you need. Once built, it'll also show you at a glance which tools are missing.

You'll want a workbench eventually, unless you don't mind nail holes in your kitchen counter or can miter frames on the livingroom rug.

A workbench isn't a luxury reserved for only the select craftsmen in your family. It provides both a work area and storage facilities—drawers are handy for nails and screws.

Hip height is comfortable and practical for a workbench top unless you plan to do a great deal of hand planing. Then, it might be well to build it a little lower.

Light the bench with fixtures about 48 inches above the top and over the front of the bench.

Some items will need special storage—away from light or at certain temperatures. Many need to be stored out of reach of children.

Have a special place for warranties, service contracts, spec sheets,

replacement parts lists, and other special instructions. Include the make, model, serial number, and date of purchase of all equipment.

Protect these papers from dust, oil, and damage. Be sure that if anybody uses your tools, he knows where the papers are stored.

Post safety rules and basic first aid procedures on a wall in the work area.

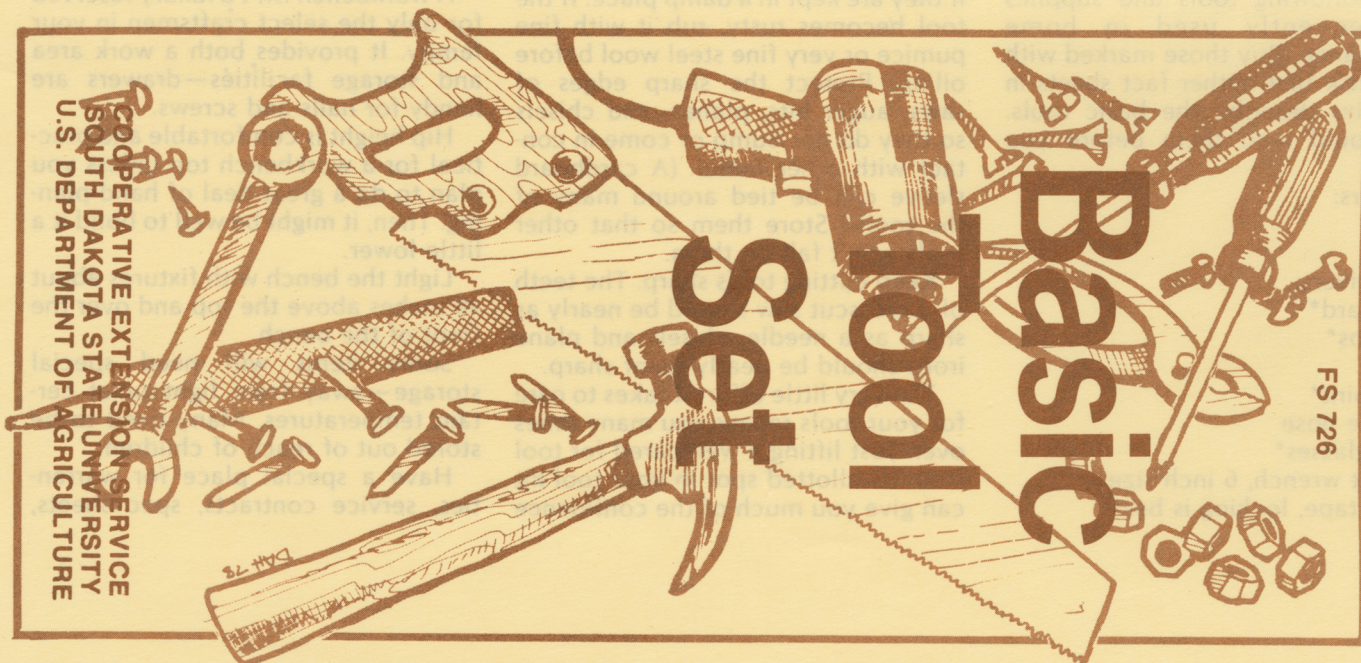
Now you're ready to start your basic tool set. Read the next fact sheets in this series so that you can make a wise selection.

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